

**Draft
Environmental Assessment**

**Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area
Pond Construction Project**

May 2016



***Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks***

**Draft Environmental Assessment
CHECKLIST**

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) proposes to construct two small water impoundments (8 acres and 11.5 acres) on the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area (CFWMA) to create shallow wetland habitat for waterfowl and variety of other game and non-game wildlife. A brood strip for pheasants would also be created as part of the project (approx 0.5 acres). Construction would occur on a former agricultural lease parcel. The project is dependent on MFWP being granted a Change-In-Water Use by the Montana DNRC (application is pending). If the Change-In-Use permit is not granted, the project will not happen.

2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:**

Canyon Ferry WMA is administered by the Bureau of Reclamation. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Park's manages the CFWMA through a Management Agreement (No. R12AC60042, 2012) with the Bureau of Reclamation.

3. **Anticipated Schedule:**

Estimated Construction Commencement Date: August 2016 (tentative – dependent upon being granted a Change-In-Water use permit by the DNRC)

Estimated Completion Date: September 2016 (see above)

Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 100%

4. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township – included map):**

The project is to be located on the east side of the Canyon Ferry Reservoir on the Canyon Ferry WMA approximately 5 miles north of Townsend, MT, in Broadwater County. The project's legal location is the NW NW 4 and NE NE 3, T7NR2E (see maps in Appendix A).

5. **Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

| | <u>Acres</u> | | <u>Acres</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| (a) Developed: | | (d) Floodplain | <u>0</u> |
| Residential | <u>0</u> | | |
| Industrial | <u>0</u> | (e) Productive: | |
| (existing shop area) | | Irrigated cropland | <u>0</u> |
| (b) Open Space/ | <u>0</u> | Dry cropland | <u>0</u> |
| Woodlands/Recreation | | Forestry | <u>0</u> |
| (c) Wetlands/Riparian | <u>0</u> | Rangeland | <u>0</u> |
| Areas | | Other | <u>~ 20</u> |

6. **Permits, Funding & Overlapping Jurisdiction.**

(a) **Permits:** Change-In-Water Use Permit – pending, applied for January 2014.

| <u>Agency Name</u> | <u>Permits</u> |
|--------------------|--|
| DNRC | Pending - Change in water use (agriculture to wildlife use) – project will not occur unless a Change-In-Use permit is authorized by the DNRC |

(b) **Funding:**

| <u>Agency Name</u> | <u>Funding Amount</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Migratory Bird Stamp Program | 61,934 |
| Bureau of Reclamation | 48,000 |
| Pheasants Forever | 5,000 |

(c) **Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

Agency Name: Bureau of Reclamation – administers property for the federal government
State Historic Preservation Office – cultural resources

7. **Narrative summary of the proposed action:**

MFWP proposes to construct two small water impoundments, approximately 8 acres and 11.5 acres in size, for the creation of shallow wetland habitat for waterfowl and a variety of other wildlife species. A brood strip for pheasants would also be created (approx. 0.5 acres). The source of water for this project would be the Montana Ditch. Water would be released from the Montana Ditch into the old Ray Creek channel that used to flow through the area for flooding each of the water projects. Both of the impoundments would include a water control structure to control water levels in the ponds to manage for emergent and submergent vegetation for the benefit of waterfowl. The brood strip would be periodically flooded during the summer period to keep the soil moist. The projects are proposed to be completed on a portion of the former Meyer agricultural lease (Parcel 61A on map). The agricultural lease on the property became vacant in 2007, and MFWP made the decision to not renew the lease but instead chose to pursue a variety of wildlife habitat improvement projects on the property including the proposed action.

MFWP manages the CFWMA as part of a long-term agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation who actually administers most of the property that comprises the CFWMA including the property where the proposed project would occur. MFWP's primary waterfowl related objectives on the CFWMA are to improve waterfowl production and recruitment through habitat manipulation and to improve waterfowl hunting opportunities. Construction of the two small ponds would work toward those objectives. Shallow seasonal ponds provide good habitat for breeding pairs, especially for dabbling duck species such as mallards, gadwalls, and pintails among others. MFWP's primary upland game bird objectives on the CFWMA are to improve seasonal habitat for upland birds (primarily pheasants) to increase production, recruitment and annual survival, and to improve upland game bird hunting opportunities. Construction of the pheasant brood strip would work towards achieving that objective by promoting insect production. Insects provide a

valuable protein source for young growing chicks.

8. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action

MFWP doesn't construct the water impoundments for creation of shallow wetland habitat nor create a brood strip for pheasant habitat. As a result, the status quo would be maintained, i.e. there would be no changes to the current condition of the proposed project area resulting in no changes to the current physical and human environment. As a result, there is no further evaluation on the impacts to the physical and human environment.

Alternative B: Proposed Action

MFWP proposes to construct two small water impoundments, approximately 8 acres and 11.5 acres in size, to create additional shallow wetland habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife species on the CFWMA. A brood strip for pheasants would also be developed (approx. 0.5 acres). Water for the ponds will come from the Montana Ditch. MFWP leases one water share (121 miner inches or 3 cfs) from the Montana Ditch company. Water would be released from the Montana Ditch into the old Ray Creek channel to deliver water to the individual water projects.

9. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Park's management agreement (Management Agreement No. R12MU60088, 2012) with the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau of Reclamation is in support of the proposed project (see letter of support, Appendix B)

A Memorandum of Agreement between the Bureau of Reclamation, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the Montana State Historic Preservation Office for the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area – Pond Proposal, Broadwater County, Montana (on file at MFWP's Townsend area wildlife office)

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

| 1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT | | | | | |
|--|---------------|------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure? | | | X | | | 1a |
| b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility? | | | X | | X | 1b |
| c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features? | | X | | | | |
| d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake? | | X | | | | |
| e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard? | | X | | | | |

1a. The structure of soils in the project area have been altered by past farming practices when the area was being actively farmed. The construction of the two water impoundments (ponds) will result in the creation of hydric soils in those affected areas (approx. 19.5 acres total).

1b. Construction of the two ponds and the pheasant brood strip will necessitate a certain amount of earth movement to build the pond embankments, deepen the ponds as necessary, and construct the pheasant brood strip. No new soil will be required. Only the local soils will be manipulated (borrow and fill) in the construction of the ponds. Some amount of soil erosion (wind and water) and compaction will occur in the project area while pond construction is ongoing. However, the pond basins will eventually be filled with water and the pond embankments will be re-vegetated (reseeded). The pheasant brood strip will be mostly saturated bare ground to encourage insect production, but annually some plant cover will naturally come back over the span of the growing season. The brood strip will be tilled with a disk on an annual basis to maintain mostly bare ground for insect production, so some minor level of soil erosion would be expected to occur on an annual basis in the brood strip area.

| 2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | | |
|--|----------|------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).) | | | X | | | 2a |
| b. Creation of objectionable odors? | | | X | | | 2b |
| c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally? | | X | | | | |
| d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants? | | X | | | | |
| e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regulations? (Also see 2a.) | | NA | | | | 2e |

2a-b: The construction of the proposed ponds will require the use of earthmoving equipment. Emissions from the construction equipment may create some exhaust odors and deteriorate ambient air quality in the immediate area of the project while construction is ongoing. However, the construction period is expected to be relatively brief at which time the air quality will return to preconstruction levels.

2e: The property is Bureau of Reclamation land and as such was not purchased with P-R/D-J money, and the project will not utilize P-R/D-J funding.

| | |
|--|--------|
| | IMPACT |
|--|--------|

| 3. <u>WATER</u> | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
|---|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Will the proposed action result in: | | | | | | |
| a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity? | | X | | | | |
| b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff? | | | X | | | 3b |
| c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows? | | | X | | | 3c |
| d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body? | | | X | | | 3d |
| e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding? | | X | | | | |
| f. Changes in the quality of groundwater? | | X | | | | |
| g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater? | | X | | | | |
| h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater? | | X | | | | |
| i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation? | | | X | | | 3i |
| j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality? | | X | | | | |
| k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity? | | | X | | | 3k |
| l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.) | | NA | | | | 3l |
| m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.) | | NA | | | | 3m |

3b-d: The purpose of the proposed project is to create two new water impoundments (ponds) for waterfowl and other wildlife habitat. The existing old Ray Creek water channel will be used to channel water into the ponds once it is released from the Montana Ditch. Any water run-off that may have occurred (minimal elevational gradients involved) in the past in the proposed project area will now end up in one of the two proposed ponds.

3i,k: MFWP previously acquired one water share from the Montana Ditch Company to provide water for the ponds and has applied for a change-in-use permit from the Montana DNRC.

3l-m: The property is Bureau of Reclamation land and as such was not purchased with P-R/D-J money, and the project will not utilize P-R/D-J funding.

| 4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in? | IMPACT | | | | | |
|--|---------|------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)? | | | X | | | 4a |
| b. Alteration of a plant community? | | | X | | | 4b |
| c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species? | | X | | | | |
| d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land? | | | X | | | 4d |
| e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds? | | | X | | X | 4e |
| f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland? | | NA | | | | 4f |
| g. Other: | | | | | | |

4a,b,d – The proposed project will change the plant community at the specific project sites. The area where the ponds are proposed for construction had until 2007 been non-native irrigated pastureland for a number of years. The area has not been irrigated since the agricultural lease on the property ended in 2007. The existing plant community, while being less productive with not being irrigated the last few years, didn't change. The area has a farming history going back a hundred years or so. Construction of the ponds will create wetland habitat resulting in the development over time of native wetland-associated plant species (both emergent and sub-emergent aquatic vegetation) in the area impacted by the ponds.

4e – The project will include ground disturbing activities, so there is the potential for the establishment/spread of noxious weeds in the project area. The potential for this will be mitigated by cleaning vehicles and equipment entering and leaving the project site. Also, only certified weed-free mixes will be used for reseeded areas. MFWP currently actively carries out mechanical, chemical, and biological weed control on the CFWMA, and these efforts will continue. Any new infestations resulting from ground disturbance would be controlled.

4f – The property is Bureau of Reclamation land and as such was not purchased with P-R/D-J money, and the project will not utilize P-R/D-J funding. In addition, the project will create wetland habitat and no prime or unique farmland will be affected as the property is currently not being used for agricultural purposes.

| 5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT | | | | | |
|--|---------------|------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat? | | X | | | | |
| b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species? | | | X | | | 5b |
| c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species? | | | X | | | 5c |
| d. Introduction of new species into an area? | | X | | | | |
| e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals? | | X | | | | |
| f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species? | | X | | | | |
| g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)? | | | X | | | 5g |
| h. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.) | | NA | | | | 5h |
| i. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.) | | NA | | | | 5h |

5b,c – There would likely be some temporary disturbance/displacement impacts to wildlife species in the vicinity of construction, but the construction time period is expected to be of a relatively short duration. In the long term, it's expected that the proposed actions will have a positive impact on both the diversity and abundance of game and non-game species that utilize the area.

5g – The CFWMA is open for hunting during established seasons and does receive a considerable amount of waterfowl and upland game bird hunting (mostly pheasants). It's expected that both waterfowl and pheasant hunters would make use of that area if the proposed project is implemented. The area is already used to some extent by pheasant hunters, and it would provide an additional hunting area for waterfowl hunters which would improve waterfowl hunter distribution on the CFWMA. Any increase in overall upland game bird or waterfowl harvest on the CFWMA would be expected to be minimal at best from hunters using the area.

5h – The property is Bureau of Reclamation land and as such was not purchased with P-R/D-J money, and the project will not utilize P-R/D-J funding. Regardless, no T&E species are present in the proposed project area.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| 6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| a. Increases in existing noise levels? | | | X | | | 6a |
| b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels? | | X | | | | |
| c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property? | | X | | | | |
| d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation? | | X | | | | |

6a – The project would involve the use of heavy equipment, so noise levels would increase during the construction phase. However, the construction time period is expected to be relatively short.

| 7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area? | | | X | | | 7a |
| b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance? | | X | | | | |
| c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action? | | X | | | | |
| d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences? | | X | | | | |

7a – The proposed action would result in the creation of two small water impoundments and a pheasant brood strip in an area that is currently idle non-native pastureland. The area has not been leased for agricultural purposes since 2007. Approximately 20.0 acres of land would be impacted out of the approximately 5,000 acres of land that comprises the Canyon Ferry WMA.

| 8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption? | | X | | | | |
| b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan? | | X | | | | |
| c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard? | | X | | | | |
| d. For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a) | | NA | | | | 8d |

8d. The property is Bureau of Reclamation land and as such was not purchased with P-R/D-J money, and the project will not utilize P-R/D-J funding. Follow up weed control would involve the use of the appropriate chemical herbicides.

| 9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area? | | X | | | | |
| b. Alteration of the social structure of a community? | | X | | | | |
| c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income? | | X | | | | |
| d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity? | | X | | | | |
| e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods? | | X | | | | |

| 10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES | IMPACT | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| Will the proposed action result in: | | | | | | |
| a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: | | X | | | | |
| b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues? | | X | | | | |
| c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications? | | X | | | | |
| d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source? | | X | | | | |
| e. Define projected revenue sources | | X | | | | |
| f. Define projected maintenance costs. | | | X | | | 10f |

10f - Anticipated annual maintenance costs are expected to be minimal and would be related to ongoing noxious weed control which already occurs on the CFWMA and is budgeted for. Maintenance costs may actually decrease by converting the land from its present condition to wetland habitat which may decrease the presence of noxious weeds. Existing small constructed wetlands on other parts of the CFWMA have required very little additional maintenance resources.

| 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT | | | | | |
|---|---------|------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view? | | X | | | | |
| b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood? | | X | | | | |
| c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.) | | | X | | | 11c |
| d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.) | | NA | | | | 11d |

11c – The CFWMA is heavily used by waterfowl and pheasant hunters as well as by recreationists including bird watchers. The proposed action would positively impact the quality and quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings on the CFWMA by increasing the diversity and abundance of a variety of both game and nongame wildlife species.

11d - The property is Bureau of Reclamation land and as such was not purchased with P-R/D-J money, and the project will not utilize P-R/D-J funding, nor will any scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted.

| 12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT | | | | | |
|---|---------|------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance? | | | X | | | 12a |
| b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values? | | | X | | | 12b |
| c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area? | | X | | | | |
| d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.) | | NA | | | | 12d |

12a, b, d – A Memorandum of Agreement between the Bureau of Reclamation, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Montana State Historic Preservation Office was developed as a result of concerns over a potential adverse effect on what is known as the Hines-Meyer Ranch and the Montana Ditch, both of

which are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (on file at MFWP's Townsend area wildlife office). Stipulations of the agreement include expanding the area of the Hines-Meyer Ranch cultural resource area, updating a past cultural resources survey to reflect the current condition and integrity of the Hines-Meyer Ranch buildings, continued use of the area for Reclamation Project purposes to include agricultural leasing and wildlife habitat management, and providing an interpretative three panel kiosk that will provide a brief history of the Hines-Meyer Ranch, the Montana Ditch, and a background of the Project.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

| 13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> Will the proposed action, considered as a whole: | IMPACT | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Unknown | None | Minor | Potentially Significant | Can Impact Be Mitigated | Comment Index |
| a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.) | | | X | | | 13a |
| b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur? | | X | | | | |
| c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan? | | X | | | | |
| d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed? | | X | | | | |
| e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created? | | X | | | | |
| f. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.) | | NA | | | | 13f |
| g. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , list any federal or state permits required. | | NA | | | | 13g |

13a – There would be a cumulative benefit to the Canyon Ferry WMA (CFWMA) by the completion of the proposed actions. The addition of the two proposed water impoundments would add additional shallow wetland areas to the east side of the CFWMA that would over time benefit numerous waterfowl and other wildlife species by providing additional forage, cover and nesting areas. No negative

cumulative impacts are anticipated.

13f,g - The property is Bureau of Reclamation land and as such was not purchased with P-R/D-J money, and the project will not utilize P-R/D-J funding

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment. The proposed action would create shallow wetland habitat for the benefit of waterfowl and other wildlife species, and the brood strip would provide brood rearing habitat for pheasants. The proposed actions would work towards MFWP meeting its objectives of improving habitat conditions on the CFWMA for waterfowl and pheasants.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public involvement:

The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- One public notice in each of these papers: Broadwater Reporter (Townsend), Helena Independent Record, Bozeman Daily Chronicle
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov>.

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having limited impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

2. Duration of comment period:

The public comment period will extend for (30) thirty days following the publication of the legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until **5:00 p.m., June 13, 2016** and can be mailed to the address below:

Attention: Adam Grove
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 998
Townsend, MT 59644

Or emailed to: adgrove@mt.gov

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

No, an EIS is not required. Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts, to include cumulative impacts, from the proposed action; therefore, an environmental assessment is deemed to be the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Adam Grove, MFWP Wildlife Biologist – Townsend, MT

3. List of agencies or offices consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Wildlife Division

Responsive Management Unit

Bureau of Reclamation

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

Appendix A – Maps for pond construction project.

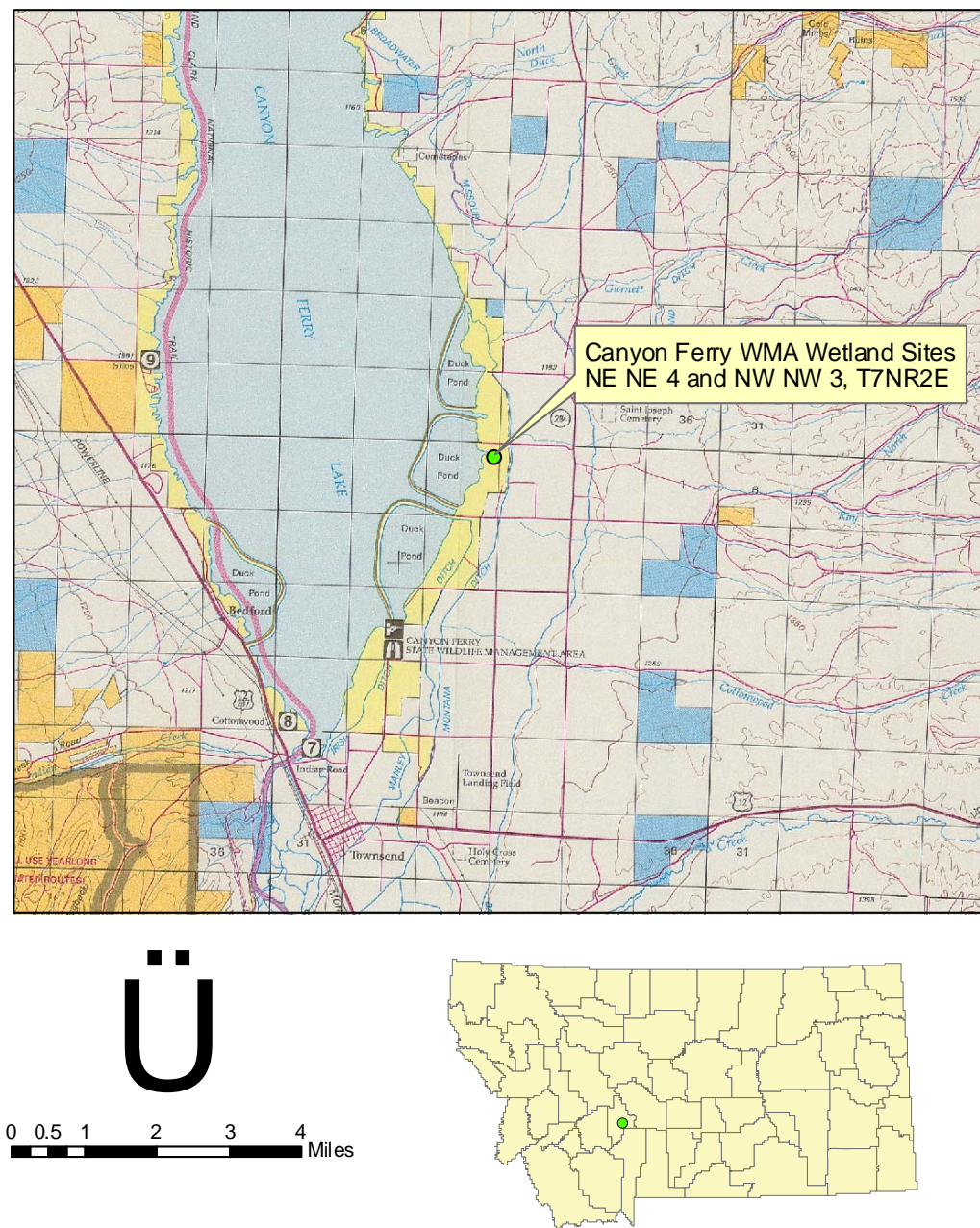


Figure 1. Project site for proposed CFWMA wetland projects, Broadwater County.

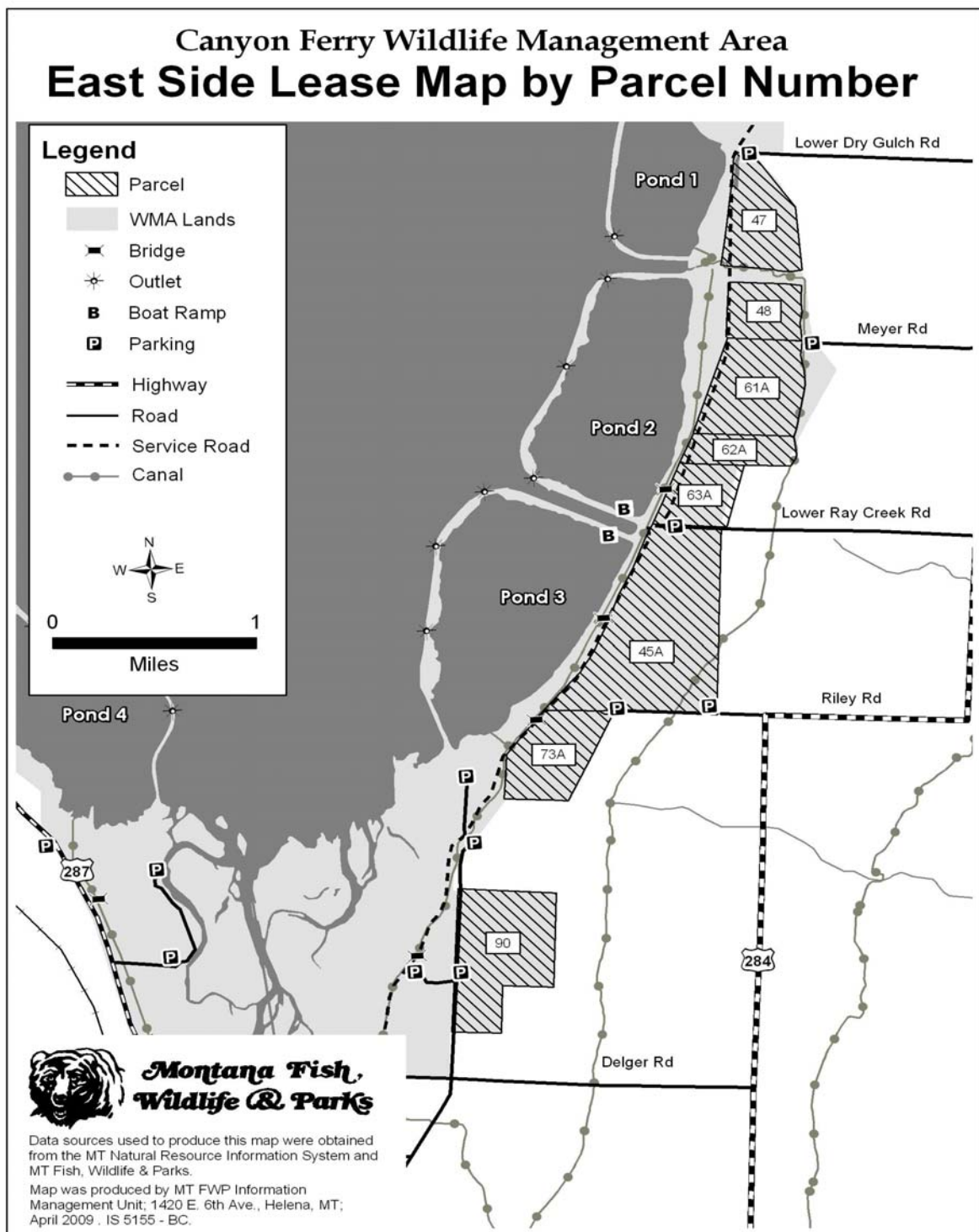


Figure 2. Map of Canyon Ferry WMA agricultural leases – project located in parcel 61A.

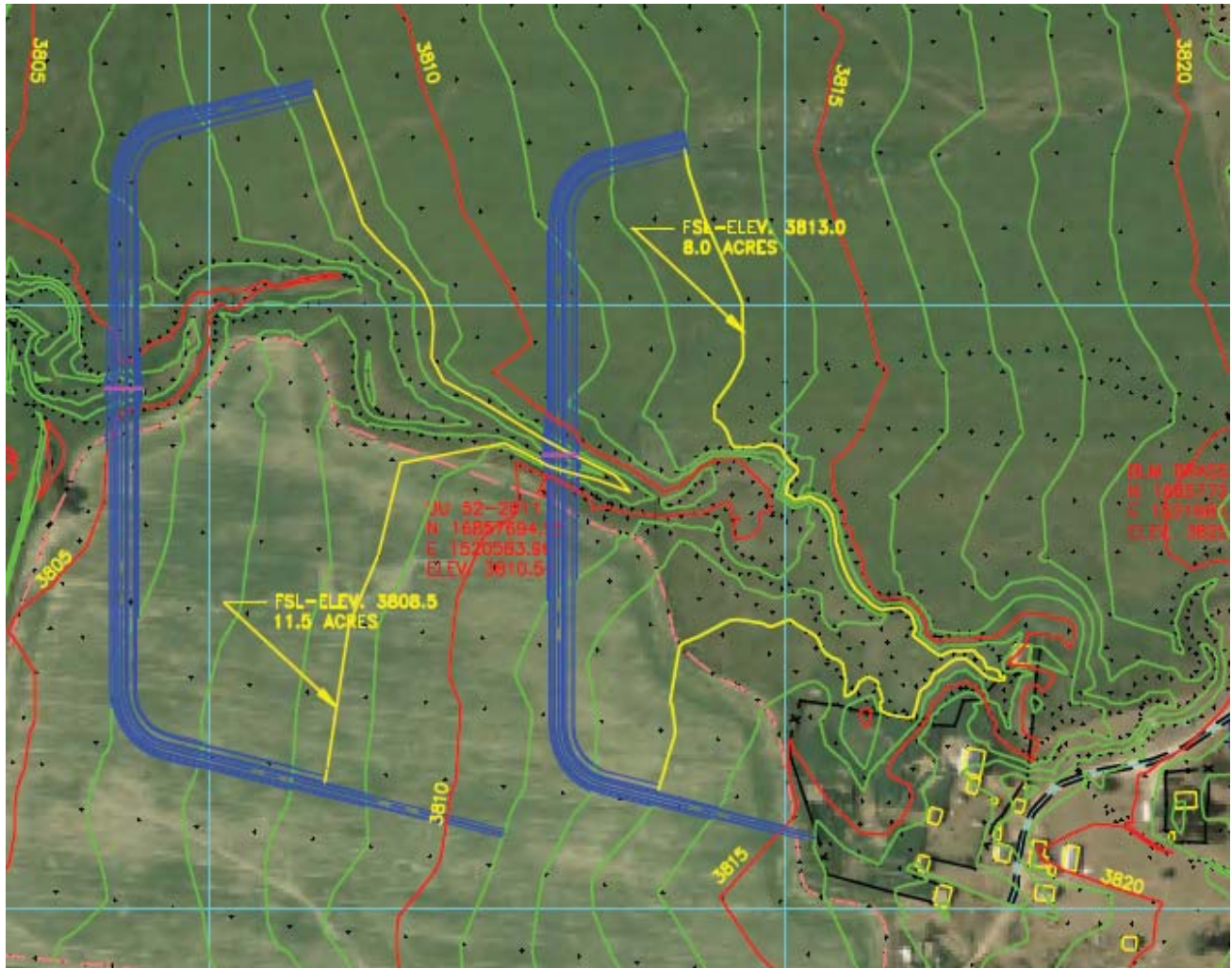


Figure 3. Embankment designs for two wetlands, CFWMA. The yellow elevation lines represent full service water levels for each impoundment. Water control structures would also be installed with each embankment to allow water management.

Appendix B: Bureau of Reclamation letter of support.



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Great Plains Region
Montana Area Office
P.O. Box 30137
Billings, Montana 59107-0137

MT-740
WTR-4.10

DEC 20 2013

Fred Jakubowski
Conservation Technician
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
P. O. Box 998
Townsend, MT 59644

Subject: Wetlands Project-Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area Wetland Complex

Dear Fred:

The purpose of this letter is to present support as the land owner, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for the proposed wetlands project on the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area Wetland Complex that is managed by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

By constructing the two ponds described in the project scope, the resultant wetlands would provide shallow wetland habitat on land that was formerly utilized for irrigated hay.

The 19.5 wetland acres would be filled from the Montana Ditch, which Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has one share of water.

Reclamation supports this long-term sustainable use of this land and associated water use and has already committed to supporting this project financially.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 406-247-7298 or by e-mail at besplin@usbr.gov.

Sincerely,

Brent C Esplin
Area Manager